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The Ebb and Flow of Morality

by RICHARD S. TAYLOR

Since the meaning of morality tends to ebb and flow with the capricious waves of civilization, it is necessary for us to establish a basic definition of morality with which we may work. Morality may be defined as the study of ideal character, actions, and ends; this includes all that is excellent and is sanctioned by one's conscience or ethical judgment. The entire concept of morality may be divided into absolute morality and relative morality. Absolute morality is the ideal of perfection and it is a disputed point regarding whether or not absolute morality can be achieved by a mortal man. Many believe that since it is an ideal it can't be achieved, for if it were achieved, it would cease to be an ideal. Perhaps the paragon of absolute morality is the Christian ideal of Jesus Christ. Relative morality, on the other hand, is neither unique nor universal. It is subject to various individual, religious, and ethnic interpretations. On some secluded island, for example, it may be moral to steal according to the customs established by the inhabitants of that island.

Most of the American Society accepts the doctrines of morality that are established by Christianity. These doctrines include that a man may be humane and altruistic, that he be conscious of a Supreme Being, and that he live by the Ten Commandments and the teachings of Christ. In recent years, however, our morality has been at "ebb tide." We seem to have forgotten the practice of altruism and are preoccupied with individual advancement rather than the universal achievement. Social pressure is the cause of much of this immorality. In order to attain a respectable social status we must be well educated, earn a large salary, own expensive possessions, and attain a personal smugness. The great flaw is that many are willing to trade all personal honor and morality for these dubious status symbols. But social pressure is not the sole culprit. A great deal of our immorality is caused by general apathy towards our fellow men. Too many of us couldn't care less what happens to the man next to them as long as they aren't affected by ourselves.

What is the solution to this declining morality? Many find a solution in various religions, but others are not satisfied with faith alone. Perhaps one of the best solutions would be to re-establish our personal honor through wholesome practices and family life. Surely it is not a hopeless case. General anxiety and apathy can be overcome. Man must once again be taught that he must choose between good and evil, between the moral and the immoral. He must realize that if he refuses to do so he will cease to be a human being and revert to his basic state, of being matter.

Man must finally realize that only through the good and the moral will he preserve his own personal stability and thus preserve civilization as a whole.

Discovery

*One time I sat among the mountains high
And looked at length on all of nature.
The lordly pines that in the night do cry
And pleasing sounds that fill one with rapture.*

*These things and many more — Have I never
Until this day really known to be so;
And now a feeling which I can't sever
From my mind takes hold of all that I know.*

*But why have I not felt this way before?
Have not the mountains always been as now?
But no — the mountains are not as before,
They are creations with meaning anew.*

*These things and more on me do have a hold,
One that captures the heart of my new soul.*

—STEVE COLLINS

The Impolite Spic

by RICHARD S. TAYLOR

When the Ortegas arrived and were first welcomed, there was no shadow of the morbidity that they would later drift into. They came brightly on a Friday afternoon in March, talking loudly, even shouting at times, as they surveyed the strangeness of the old Wilson house. Spring was half over in the Louisiana town, and three-foot weeds already covered the long unattended yard. The small boy, Pablo Ortega, galloped excitedly through the weeds, breaking paths, while his mother and his grandmother accompanied his father on an initial head-shaking inspection tour of the old walls and columns of the house. It looked similar to a serious adult follow-the-leader game as the grown-ups moved along in single file, at times all three jabbering at once. First the father would rub a piece of flaking paint or kick a post or knock on a wall. Then his wife would repeat his action and the two of them would move on, leaving the old prune of a grandmother to methodically rub, kick, or knock, and then scurry after them.

When the moving van arrived a few minutes later, the Ortegas had all returned to their starting point on the front walk. Pablo, panting like a playful dog, had joined them; gazing at the old house, all four of them stood there as though posing for a photographer. Finally the father reached deeply into his blue suit pocket and extracted a shiny new key, and for the first time, opened the house for his family.

The movers began their systematic trips. After anxiously following them back and forth for several trips, the grandmother found a broom and began sweeping the front porch and walk. By the time the moving van had left, all four of the Ortegas had found jobs and were busy at them. The wife opened windows and mopped floors; the man ripped open crates; the boy found a rusty old machete and began chopping weeds; the grandmother continued to sweep.

Thus occupied, they received their first visitor. Mrs. Simmons, their only next-door neighbor, had, upon seeing the

moving van and curiously looking over the Ortegas' furniture, rinsed the dust from a lemonade set she had gotten recently with trading stamps and made a pitcher of lemonade. Neatly arranging the pitcher and glasses on a tray, she proudly bore her gift to her new neighbors. The grandmother, hard at work on the front steps, was the first one she greeted.

"Hello, there," she beamed, "I'm Margaret Simmons from next door. I'm so happy to see ya'll are going to be my new neighbors. I thought ya'll might like some cold lemonade."

Startled, the grandmother looked up at her, then seeing the lemonade, grinned a huge snaggle-tooth grin and began nodding vigorously. Mrs. Simmons cleared her throat and began again, "I'm your next-door neighbor . . ."

"Maria, venga!" Mrs. Simmons was interrupted by a piercing shriek from the old lady. "Maria!" the leathery old lady shouted in the direction of the house again. "La senora es aqui con un regalo!" An expression of amazement fell over Mrs. Simmons' face as she stood gazing at the strange old lady.

The two waited in a short silence. "Maria!" the grandmother shouted again. The tray was becoming increasingly heavy when the young wife finally appeared on the front porch.

"La senora tiene un regalo," said the grandmother, pointing to Mrs. Simmons.

Putting her hand to her eyes to shield the bright sun as she walked towards them, Mrs. Ortega said, "Hello."

"Hello," responded Mrs. Simmons with a faint sigh of relief. "I was just telling this . . . lady that I'm Mrs. Simmons from next door. I saw ya'll moving in and I thought ya'll might like some cold lemonade."

The dark young lady looked somewhat puzzled as she searched for words, "I no speak good the English . . . maybe . . . I go get my . . . I go get Carlos." At that she went scurrying back up the front steps.

"Wait, won't you please take this lemonade?" Mrs. Simmons called, but the wife was already inside.

Mrs. Simmons looked at the melting ice in the sweating pitcher. She was about to set the tray down on the ground when Mrs. Ortega reappeared at the door with her husband.

"Hello," he called hurrying towards the woman on his short legs. Following closely behind him were his wife and son. "My name is Carlos Ortega. Please to forgive my wife and mother who no to learn the English so good."

"Hello," said Mrs. Simmons once again. She was growing a little tired of the word by now. "I was just telling your wife that I'm ya'll's next-door neighbor and I thought ya'll might like some cold lemonade." She handed the tray to Mr. Ortega and began to rub the upper part of her arms.

Mr. Ortega looked at the remaining tiny pieces of ice in the watery lemonade. "Thank you very much," he said politely. "This looks very well. We just to move in our new house. Please you to come in," he managed.

"Why thanks, ya'll," replied Mrs. Simmons, "but I have a cake in the oven that I must get back to now." She began backing down the walk. Young Pablo stood peering at her from behind his father and the grandmother continued grinning.

"Yes . . . cake," Mr. Ortega stammered.

Mrs. Simmons started to explain but instead turned and went home. From the window Mrs. Simmons observed the Ortegas chattering on their front porch drinking her weak lemonade.

The next day a delivery truck stopped at the Ortega house, and a cage containing a full grown monkey was deposited on their front porch. Almost immediately a group of curious neighborhood children gathered to stare at the strange creature. Pablo came out of the house, opened the cage, and the monkey leaped into his arms. Although Pablo ignored the other children, the monkey peered over his shoulder, chattering and finally mak-

ing obscene gestures at the children. This little display delighted the children, and their laughter brought Mr. Ortega out of the house. He loudly scolded the monkey in rattling Spanish which also amused the children, and they laughed even harder. Pablo, embarrassed, carried his new pet to the garage which he and his father had prepared the night before to house the monkey.

Pablo and his father, who had been closely followed by their young audience, stood in the garage which had chicken wire over all possible escape holes. Suddenly a piece of Hershey bar landed on the ground near the monkey and he scampered over, turned it over once, and then stuffed it into his tiny mouth. He commenced to turn a flip, chatter, hide his eyes, and then venture toward the crowd of youngsters. Pablo stood alone with two puddles of tears in his eyes. Another piece of candy rolled into the garage, and the monkey repeated his cute ceremony. The group was grinning now, but Pablo edged his way towards the garage door. Suddenly a piece of chewed bubble gum was tossed on the floor. The monkey picked it up and made a long rope out of it, then tried to put it in his mouth.

"Chico!" the little boy yelled, running toward the monkey. Part of the bubble gum stuck to the monkey's paw, part was in the fur on his chest, and the remainder was around his tiny face. Laughter sprang from the crowd.

Pablo lunged for the monkey but missed, hitting only the dusty floor. The monkey leaped to the rafter and sat there. "Chico!" cried the boy again. And once again hysterical laughter came from the children. Pablo, with tears streaming down his cheeks, began scolding them in Spanish. Each word from Pablo amused the children even more, and when Pablo picked up a stick and began beating the monkey, the children howled, the monkey screamed, and Pablo cried.

"Pablo!" said his father. "Pablo. Stop!" A silence fell over the crowd and Pablo, and only the noise of a frightened monkey remained. "You," said Mr. Ortega sternly, "you to go home, all of you." They turned and left, followed by an echo of giggles. "Pablo, of you I ashamed." The monkey watched silently with bubble gum all in his fur.

For a while after that incident, the neighborhood children

watched the monkey only from across the street. But Mr. Ortega, not wanting to be disliked, began inviting them over, and on warm afternoons he would let the monkey perform for them. Enjoying the delight of the children, he began to leave the door of the garage open so that the children could enjoy the monkey whenever they wanted to. He eventually stopped this, however, for one day, after noticing several welts on the monkey's skin, found some copper B-B's lying on the garage floor. He tried hard to understand that they were only children.

The Ortegas were performing miracles in restoring the old Wilson house. The weeds were the first thing to be attended to. Mrs. Simmons' husband had seen Pablo hacking at the weeds with a rusty machete, and offered to lend him an equally rusty but much more effective sickle. To show their gratitude, the grandmother prepared some exotic Spanish food for Mr. Simmons who ate until he could hold no more of the seasoned delicacies. As he was leaving, he thanked the Ortegas for the meal, and they thanked him too politely for having come.

When he returned to Mrs. Simmons, she asked him what he thought of their new neighbors. "Nice people," he replied.

"That's not how they impressed me."

He gave a faint laugh. "How'd they impress you."

"Well, besides being overly loud, like most foreigners, they seemed very different from other people. That old one looks like a witch . . . all of them look like gypsies who have suddenly inherited some money."

"You couldn't be more wrong. They are extremely polite people." He started to tell his wife about the food he had been served, but feeling a tinge of heartburn, decided not to.

"I just don't care for them," she summed up.

The next morning Mr. Ortega bought several gallons of paint and began painting the house. By the middle of April, the old two-story frame house sparkled with new white paint. The green that he painted the window frames and doors was a little

loud for the general decorum of the neighborhood, but the neighbors attributed this to the Ortegas' Latin-American origin.

While her husband worked on the house, Mrs. Ortega occupied herself with creating beautiful flower gardens about the yard. After one and a half months, the yard looked like a floral rainbow.

It was this expert gardening which brought Mrs. Ortega into association with the Windsor Heights Garden Club. When asked by Mrs. Simmons to speak to the club about her gardening techniques, she refused at first saying that she couldn't speak English that well. Her husband, however, convinced her that by the time of the meeting, still a month away, she could have practiced her English a little better.

During that month Mrs. Ortega became friendlier with her neighbors, occasionally stopping to chat with them by the sidewalk. Her shyness began to disappear, and she practiced her speech constantly. She was almost looking forward to giving it.

On the day of the luncheon, everything went well during her speech. She blushed modestly as the women applauded. For the first time since leaving her home she felt accepted. Then she blundered. It was actually a minor mistake, merely a foible in the international language barrier. At any other time it could have been laughed out of existence, but not now. It was one of those times when the conversation seems to become silent. Embarrassed by this sudden silence, someone asked Mrs. Ortega what kind of fertilizer she used on her lawn.

This sudden attention caused blood to flush her dark-skinned face. "I . . ." she began, but hesitated, forgetting the verbs and nouns she had been working so hard to learn. "I . . . I to crap on it," she finally blurted out.

This was wrong. Words now rushed into her mind: "to use" and "manure", but it was too late. Everyone was spell-bound, staring at her. She turned and went running home, not even stopping to apologize.

That night she tearfully told Carlos about the incident.

He advised that she forget about it and go on making friends. She tried. At first she continued to smile and say hello to Mrs. Simmons, then the hellos stopped, and eventually so did the smiles.

Mrs. Ortega managed to occupy herself with her flowers. But summer vacation brought on another problem. Before the Ortegas had moved there, the neighborhood children had been allowed to romp across the yard of the old Wilson house, and they continued to do so, right over Mrs. Ortega's flowers. When she suggested a fence, Carlos said, "Fence? How do you make friends with fences?" He suggested that he find out which children were playing in the flowers, then politely — always politely — go to their houses and talk to their parents about it.

Unfortunately the first child to respass after this new policy was the son of an illiterate house painter who lived in the top of a rented garage on the next street.

Carlos knocked at the man's apartment, and the man appeared at the door clad only in trousers, holding a beer can.

"Hello, I you neighbor from next street," Carlos said.

"What?" was his reply.

"I you neighbor. I wish to talk to you about you son." He paused to be invited in, but saw that he wasn't going to be, so he continued. "You son, he walks across my wife's flowers. We pardon him, but want you to talk to him about it."

"What, ya' old lady yelling at ya' about it, spic?" the man said harshly.

"My . . . old lady?" Once again the language barrier interfered.

"Yea, yea . . . What the hell? You want me to pay for your old lady's flowers or something?"

"Oh, no, no. He young. Sometime he maybe forget when he's playing. Just please to talk to the boy." He was too polite again.

"Sure, spic."

The door slammed. Carlos started to knock again, but instead he left.

The next day his wife told him that she had seen the boy deliberately showing-off for his friends, running through the flowers. The boy made faces at the grandmother when she scolded him, then severely ridiculed her before running off. Carlos bought some concrete and wire and began digging post holes. By the middle of the next week, the entire yard was enclosed by a fence. The remaining flowers were sadly torn and delapidated. The fence somehow made the Ortegas seem even more mysterious in the eyes of their neighbors. Their house, which had been visited seldom, now was never visited.

"It's a shame," said Mr. Simmons. "They seemed like such nice people when they first moved in. It's a damn shame."

"They may be nice, but they certainly are weird," added Mrs. Simmons. "All they ever do is work in the yard and play with that stupid monkey. I wouldn't have a monkey myself. I heard they're nasty animals."

The Ortegas continued their daily routine, never venturing from behind their fence except when necessary. By the time summer had settled on Louisiana, they avoided the sun and stayed mostly in the relative coolness of their barn-like house. Carlos went to work each morning and did whatever shopping was necessary before coming home; his wife watered her flowers each day, but otherwise stayed inside; Pablo no farther than the garage; the grandmother went nowhere. Their neighbors either ignored them completely or spoke of them only with a laugh.

One night about an hour after the Ortegas had gone to bed, they were awakened by frenzied screams from the garage. Both Carlos and Pablo hurried in putting on their clothes and ran into the backyard in time to see three figures scurrying over the fence. Carlos entered the garage to find the monkey lying on the floor, blood spurting from several holes in his chest. After a series of convulsions, the screaming monkey died. Carlos and Pablo stood without tears this time.

"Go to tell your mother no to come."

Pablo turned and walked out. When Carlos heard some loud cries, he turned to see Pablo lying in a fetal position in a clump of flowers.

"Wish they'd shut the hell up down there," yawned Mr. Simmons from his bedroom window.

The next day, the neighbors were greeted with a dead monkey hanging in the gate of the front yard of the Ortega house. He hung there for several days, decomposing in the harsh Louisiana heat. Finally, after the smell became too rank, police were petitioned to the Ortega house with orders to have the monkey removed. When the policeman said something sarcastic about the Ortega family's being deported, Carlos smiled rather impolitely.

"Various contemporary misconceptions about human equality increase envy and breed unhappiness . . . to each individual that lives under them they represent additional stress, which must be partly pain."

John Fowles
The Aristos

Sonnet I

*The world needs morals and brotherly love,
A fresh new example, a guiding light,
Another Renaissance, I'm thinking of,
To extirpate words like "hate" and "fight."*

*Think of your homeland, your sweetheart or wife,
Think of your children so ignorant of hate.
Let us be loving and take not their lives,
Let us be thoughtful before it's too late.*

*Raise now our youths and prepare them to fight,
Not Russia, nor China, nor Communists' iron might.
To fight o'er doctrines is banal and trite
When there's hunger, hate, ignorance and blight.*

*Why is there hatred? Why must there be fear?
Why can't God's love triumph and be near?*

—TOM PHILLIPS

Study In Indigo

*Of an evening, bleak and dreary,
I sat and stared through the dusty pane.
Tired by endless tasks, by studies weary,
My thoughts wandered off in a pensive vein.
What use, I wondered, in diligent studies?
I washed further adrift in a sea of apathy,
Longing for home and remembered buddies,
Feeling waves of dissatisfaction wash over me.
My thoughts recalled the wistful tune —
"I wish it were the eighth of June."*

—H. F. SIEBER III

To The Moon

*Beware, O moon;
We will be there soon.
Beware, O Moon;
Blast off time is noon.*

—S. HENLEY CARTER

Terminal Anecdote

by MARK MAINES

I was in the Washington, D.C. train station with a friend. This friend had to go to the bathroom, so I pointed to the sign that read "Men's Room." A few minutes later, I decided to wash my hands. I went to the men's room and found my friend. He was in a pay toilet that had a sink in the booth. I tried to open the door but couldn't. Finally, I became upset and asked my friend how the stupid thing worked. He replied in a rather off-hand way, "The same as all the rest—you sit on it."

*men create grotesque little worlds
struggling against the absolute.
how foolish they are!
how unnatural in nature.*

—RICHARD TAYLOR

Today's Morals

by JOE RAVENEL

Today I am afraid. Of what? Tomorrow! Today we are embroiled in the tragedy of lowering and perhaps destroying the morals of ourselves and well as those of future generations. This tragedy is like a mythical serpent from the sea; and unknowingly we are also being engulfed by this tyrant of declining morality.

However, the teenagers certainly cannot be blamed entirely for the decreasing morality. It was not the teen group who introduced or manufactured the topless bathing suit. Neither is it the teenagers who run the side shows at the fairs.

In addition, another contributing factor to the seemingly decreasing teenage morality is the publicity that the teenagers receive. The articles about the teenagers are so common that they cause little or no alarm. Can it be that the public is accepting these crimes as normal behavior?

However, with today's news media, the teenagers are receiving greater publicity, both good and bad. Many feel that today's morals are no worse than they were twenty years ago. Perhaps this is true, but now is the time to stop this moral decay. Each person must live with himself. May his conscience be a wise guide!

AND Deliver Us From Evil

by THOMAS L. PHILLIPS

"... Some will never return. Embrace these, Father, and receive them, Thy heroic servants, into Thy Kingdom."
—FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT

Most grown men, even soldiers, have traces of their childish fears of the dark. When the dark is actually full of enemies, the first thing that any man will look for is a friend.

On June 6, 1944, the Germans were out singly or in small patrols, and they had just the same childish fear. They tried to find other Germans or to get back to their units so they could band together for defense and moral support. Hundreds and hundreds of men, Americans, British, and Germans were prowling about the countryside of Normandy, trigger happy and mortally afraid because of sheer loneliness in a strange land. Anything that moved or made a noise and couldn't give a split second answer to a challenge was likely to get shot. The local livestock suffered considerably that night.

Among the Germans unwillingly out in the dark was a young man named Franz Muller. Franz Muller was a medical orderly in a mobile artillery regiment. His regiment had arrived in this district two weeks before for the specific job of opposing an airborne landing.

Muller, who was nineteen, was in France like many other soldiers because he had already been badly wounded in Russia and was rated unfit for any more active front. All Muller's experiences as a medic had been in Russia where neither side paid much attention to the Geneva Convention. He had worn a red cross, but he carried a rifle too, and used it when he had to. He had brought it with him to France.

The regiment was situated on a hill overlooking a wide, partly wooded plain. From the top of the hill Muller and his friend, Friedrich Busch, had watched the planes fly over and un-

load their human cargo into the moonlit night. Muller almost felt sorry for the men in those parachutes. He saw many of them shot by the gunners of his regiment and he saw others swallowed up in the floodwaters of the Douve River.* He felt certain that the rest would be rounded up soon. He still could not easily dismiss them from his mind, though. These paratroopers were something to be feared. He had heard that they took no prisoners and he had even seen German paratroopers shoot their Russian prisoners. Busch, also, had seen the ruthlessness of their own paratrooper in North Africa.

Hauptman Hessler came toward the tree under which Muller, Busch, and several other men were sitting.

"Muller, you and Busch will have to go with the patrol down toward the river. Hurry up! They are leaving now."

"Yes, sir," they replied together. Busch grabbed his rifle and trotted down the path to join the two vanishing men of the patrol. Muller rose, slipped on the haversack containing his medical equipment and reached for his rifle, which was leaning against another tree nearby.

"Hold it, Muller. What the hell do you think you are doing? You can't carry that thing," said Hessler.

"And why not, sir? I carried it for a solid year in Russia, and I used it too. Several times in Russia I have owed my life to my rifle!" he replied defiantly. "I don't intend to give it up now."

"You'll do what you are ordered!" shouted Hessler. Then in a slightly calmer, almost fatherly tone, he added, "These enemies out there are either American or British. You can't carry arms against them. I have fought in Russia and Italy, too, and

*The Germans flooded the Douve River over its banks to discourage airborne landings. Much of the coast behind Normandy was marshland because of this defensive measure.

I know what the Anglo-Americans are like. Believe me, you are better off to leave it here. Now put it down and move out."

"Very well, sir," answered Muller sullenly. "But I don't like it. It's like sending me into the lion's cage and telling me the lion won't bite."

Hessler walked away with this reminder. "Leave that weapon here or I'll have you court martialed! Do you understand me?"

"Yes, sir!" responded Muller. When Hessler had gone, he slid a luger into his hip pocket and hurried off to find the vanished patrol. Orders are orders, he thought, but common sense is something else.

One of the Anglo-Americans soon to land in Normandy was a young Virginian named Thomas Lee from the Shenandoah Valley. He was a paratrooper of the 101st Airborne Division.

* * *

At the moment, many "screaming eagles" of the 101st more closely resembled howling Comanches because they were all covered with war paint which gave them a very fierce countenance. Many of the men, including Lee, had shaved their heads, Mohawk style, on the night before, leaving only a thin strip of hair from the forehead to the nape of the neck.

Lee sat looking across the bowels of the plane at the preoccupied faces across from him. These men, some of the finest shock troops in the world, did not have very soldierly appearances. Many of them had painted nude women or had written obscenities on the backs of their tunics. Lee himself settled for the words, SEE YOU IN PARIS on the back of his. He hoped to himself that it would be after the war. Most of the men were studying the faces across from them or staring into space. A few were scrutinizing their laps or examining their nails for the nth time.

The fella next to Lee punched him in the ribs and passed him a bottle of whiskey.

"Where in the hell did you get that?" Lee asked.

"The C.O. had it and passed it down the line. Take some and pass it on."

Lee passed it on without taking any. He watched the bottle progress from one seated stoic to another. He noticed that only a few partook of its contents. It returned to the officer only half empty.

Soon after this interlude, the red light flashed on and everyone stood up to hook up their rip cords to the static line. Immediately the flack began to explode outside and the pilot began to throw the plane around in violent evasive action. The effect of his maneuvers on the standing men was chaotic. The sudden lurches threw some off balance. They fell to the floor encumbered by their heavy equipment. Others tripped over the fallen men as they tried to advance to the door and fell in struggling, cursing heaps. Out of the chaos the officer shouted to the pilot.

"Hold your course, you damn fool!"

"We've been hit in the tail!" one of the crewmen shouted back.

"You can still fly straight, can't you?" returned the angry officer. Before an answer was made, the green light flashed and the officer's turn came to jump. He thrust the bottle of whiskey at the crewman and spoke.

"You're going to need this." He jumped.

Lee was third following the officer and was quickly out of the plane. When his chute opened, he looked up. At that moment, the airplane exploded. The right wing slowly parted from the fuselage and floated down toward the ground. One other man got out. He was apparently knocked from the open door by the explosion. His chute opened and then folded into a useless streamer. The plane spiraled down to meet the earth with a crash.

* * *

Down in the woods it was eerie and dark. The silence was oppressive. Many of the trees were draped with parachutes. From some of them, corpses dangled grotesquely. They were

probably victims of the German regiment's sharpshooting. On some trees the harnesses were empty and the occupants had disappeared.

Presently, Muller heard a German voice. Pressing on, he came upon a glade where a man was lying on the ground apparently dead. A German soldier was rifling the man's pockets and taking whatever he wanted. The injured man looked like an American from what Muller could see. Muller didn't say anything.

He walked toward the husky German as he finished his business by slipping a ring from the American's finger. He stood up and started to walk away. The stillness of the glade was rent by a shot from a rifle fired close at hand. The thief dropped as if he were pole-axed from behind.

Instantly, Muller looked around for cover. There was none near, so he did something which amazed even him, after he had had time to think about it. He knelt down by the wounded American and began his usual routine of first aid. He fully expected at any moment to feel a bullet crash into his body. Sweat saturated his shirt and pants and rolled down his forehead. He could feel eyes watching, penetrating. Why hadn't he run? Was he to die while trying to preserve life? Why hadn't he run? Why? Why?

Something fell in front of him. He jumped, startled, as the white object rolled off the wounded man's chest. A cigarette! Another fell by Muller's trembling hand. Then another, and another. A veritable shower of cigarettes came from the trees around him. A glint of hope sparkled in his eye. The Americans were paying him, the best way they knew how, for aiding their buddy. Perhaps he would survive this mess after all. He could imagine what would have happened to him if these men in the trees had been Russians. Thank God it was the Americans.

He finished his work on the American and weakly stood up. Slowly he walked out of the glade, never daring to look up at his merciful enemies.

* * *

Lee had little time to watch the plane crash. He looked

down at the land below him. It should be easy to pick out the landmarks from up here. The ground was illuminated by the moon and the reflection of the searchlight from the clouds. Tracers were passing him. He looked up and saw them tearing through his parachute. This somehow did not scare him. It just made him mad because he couldn't see who was shooting at him. There was not much time to worry about it, though. The wind was taking him toward a farmhouse in front of which were parked several German staff cars.

This is no place for me, he thought. He tried to manipulate the chute away from the place, but there was nothing he could do. The wind steadily pushed him towards the house.

He fell through a tree and his chute stuck in it. He swung violently against the wall of the house and finally dropped out of the harness into the garden. He was surprised to find two other men there already. A German threw open a window upstairs and leaned out.

"Wer ist da?"

He was answered by a flying brick picked up from the garden walk. It was a good shot. There was a crash of glass and the German pulled his head back in. Lee and his unknown companions ran as fast as they could out of the garden gate at the back of the house, while the German headquarters staff poured out of the front door.

* * *

Muller was not enjoying prowling through the woods, but at least it was for a humanitarian motive. That's more than most men could say on this night, he thought to himself.

He leaned against a tree and removed his helmet. Hessler was right about the Americans. They were different from the Russians. He reached for his handkerchief in his hip pocket and felt the luger. His knees buckled and he wearily sagged down in

front of a tree, shuddering. What if he had been carrying a rifle? My God! He would probably be sprawled out next to the thief back in the glade. Thank God that Hessler had been so insistent. Those Americans! Muller could not get them out of his mind. Why hadn't they shot him? Maybe people are still acting human somewhere in the world.

Suddenly the stillness broke with a loud pop. Muller froze. Every shadow was now hostile.

"Franz, is that you?" The voice came from behind him.

Muller spun around with an oath and searched the darkness frantically.

"It's Friedrich. Don't be alarmed."

"Don't be alarmed! Don't be alarmed! My God! You scare the hell out of me and then tell me not to be alarmed! Why you little . . ."

"Shhhhhh! Be quiet, will you? And put up that pistol."

"Pistol?"

Muller looked down at his hands. There was his luger pointing at Friedrich's stomach. Only the safety had saved Friedrich Busch from a horrible wound and possible death.

"My God! Friedrich, I—I almost shot you."

"Will you shut up?" There are Americans all around us. Come on and follow me. We've got to get out of here."

They moved off through the trees and presently joined two other men next to a hedgerow. There, they silently exchanged greetings and moved out into the moonlit fields adjacent to the marsh.

* * *

The three Americans finally stopped in an orchard full of

cows. Lee had never seen either of the two men before. In fact, they were all strangers to each other. The other two men were from the 82nd Airborne. How they got in the garden Lee never found out. After a short introduction, they became concerned with what they should do next.

"Which way is the channel?" asked one blackfaced man.

"I think it's behind us," answered Lee.

"In that case we want to move off to our left. That headquarters back there is to the right of the drop zone, I think," said the third man who also had blackened his face.

"I'm glad somebody knows where we are," said Lee. "Are you sure you're right?"

"Yep," said the third man.

"Then let's get out of here. The Lord only knows who might be lurking in the shadows," said the first man.

BANG! The speaker collapsed with a moan.

Lee and the other man scrambled for cover while the bovines stampeded helter-skelter.

Lee darted back to the wounded man and grabbed his arms. He tugged and pulled, expecting at any second to be shot at. No shot was fired. Apparently the unknown assailant had retired under the impact of the charging cattle.

The other man helped Lee put the wounded man on his shoulder.

"We've got to get outta here now for sure," said Lee.

"Yeah, let's move," answered the other paratrooper.

Lee lifted the man higher up on his shoulder and they hurried off in the darkness toward the floodwaters of the Douve.

* * *

As Muller shuffled along the country lane, he noticed that the black was turning grey on the eastern horizon. What a night this has been, he thought to himself. What else could happen to me? Suddenly, the man in front of him dropped to the ground. Muller quickly followed suit and listened. No sound. He slowly crawled ahead to where Friedrich Busch lay.

"Hear that?"

Muller listened for a moment.

"No," he whispered.

"Shhhh. Listen for a while."

Muller listened again. After a while he heard voices.

"Now I hear it."

"Come on, follow me." Without waiting for a reply of negative or affirmative, he crawled down the ditch beside the road. Muller followed. He couldn't help thinking that he was making a lot of noise. "Those damn twigs," he thought. "How is anybody supposed to be quiet in a brush pile?" All he could see of Busch was a glimpse of an occasional foot as it moved along in the tall grass ahead. They crawled to the edge of a hedgerow and skirted a field. Muller's thighs began to throb and his elbows ached. Finally, they were at the other end of the ditch. They could hear the voices quite distinctly now. They were neither German nor French. The voices were not far away. Very carefully Busch and Muller crawled along the hedgerow for another thirty yards. Busch stopped and silently rose to his knees. He and Muller peered through the foliage of the bushes and stared in astonishment. There, in a small meadow were two Americans who seemed preoccupied with something. On the back of one of

the tunics was a very well done picture of a nude woman. The other had the words SEE YOU IN PARIS printed on his tunic.

After a moment, Busch, who had learned English in Denmark, poked his rifle through the hedge and said one word.

At this surprise greeting, the two Americans spun around.

"Hello."

"Hands up!" said Busch. He pushed his way through the bushes and covered the two men. Muller, also, slid through the underbrush and faced the Americans. It was then that they saw a third man lying on the ground unconscious. So these are Americans, too, thought Muller. They were very different from the man back in the glade. They stood facing him with their hands up. One's head was bare. It was almost bald in fact! All of his head was shaved except for a strip from forehead to nape. His face was covered with red and yellow paint in symmetrical designs on both cheeks and forehead. He was a most terrifying sight.

The other fellow had blackened his face and hands as had the man lying on the ground. He resembled a painted minstrel somewhat except he wasn't smiling. He glared at Muller and Busch as if his eyes could burn them like hot poker. They were all dressed in baggy clothing and wore several bandoliers each. On their left sleeve there were miniature American flags, probably used for quick identification.

"I'm sorry, but we must search you!" said Busch.

"O.K.," said the Mohawk. "But don't take the picture of my girl."

"We'll take nothing but your weapons," said Busch. "Search them, Franz."

Muller carefully walked over to the Mohawk and began to go through his pockets. The collection of stuff which he

found surprised him even more. It included chocolate, silk stockings, and elegant lingerie.

"What's that for?" demanded Busch when he saw what Muller had found.

"That's for the little girls in Paris," the prisoner said, nodding toward the clothing, "and the candy is for me. Have some. Say, how far is it Paris?"

"I don't know, I've never been there," said Busch, as he took a piece of chocolate from Muller.

"Don't eat it. It might be poisoned," said Muller in German.

"What did he say?" asked the American.

Busch told him and the American laughed.

"It's not poisoned," he said. His eyes met Muller's and Muller felt a strange bond with this casual, self-confident fellow who seemed to take war so lightly. He felt that this odd looking American would have been a good companion had they met in peacetime.

Muller continued to disarm them and wondered at the armament they possessed: three sub-machine guns, six knives, eleven grenades, a pistol and around 1000 rounds of ammunition.

When the Americans were disarmed, Muller turned his attention towards the wounded man who was badly hurt. Muller did what he could, but it was only a minute or two before the man died.

"I'm sorry," said Muller and he truly was, for the body seemed so pathetic under this wide open sky as the red rays in the east were bringing a new day.

The blackfaced man knelt down beside the dead man and

silently closed his eyes. Then he crossed the lifeless arms upon the man's chest.

He began to say the Lord's Prayer. Busch and the American joined in.

"Our Father, Who art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven."

Muller and the two young Germans, recognizing the rhythm, took up the prayer in German. As the rays of the rising sun lanced through the trees and fell upon them, the six men in their two languages prayed together, grouped around the man who had died.

"Und Fuehre uns nicht in Versuchung

Sondern enloses uns von Uebel . . . Amen."

The Wonder of a Wonder

*As I strolled along the sandy shore
And danced in and out the playful surf,
I watched the crashing waves rise and roar
And thought of the changes of God's great earth.*

*In the winter season the shore is bare
With the sight of a gull extremely rare;
But during the summer, much life is there
With mirth riding on the lulls of the air.*

*A change like this is a true miracle
In which our Creator shows his true strength
By changing nature into spectacles
Which cannot be measured by a length.*

*But God is the greatest wonder of all
For we know not where his power shall fall.*

S. HENLEY CARTER

